

Overview

Our mission is to create a global community dedicated to encouraging women to lean in to their ambitions.

Catalyzed by the book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* written by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, a team of leaders and educators has come together to launch Lean In. Lean In will combine practical education and focused discussion to give women the tools they need to realize their goals.

Over the past decade, the percentage of women in leadership roles in the U.S. has stalled across almost every industry. Our premise is that women can work together to change this trajectory—the shift to a more equal world will happen with each woman who leans in.

Lean In will tap into the best of social networking, online learning and small peer groups to create a community that provides regular encouragement and support. Lean In will be open and self-organizing and serve as a platform for companies and organizations to build upon.

Lean In Overview

Lean In consists of three integrated programs:

Lean In Community

The Lean In Community will be tightly integrated with Facebook to provide daily access to inspirational stories, conversations on important topics and insights from senior leaders across business, government and academia. The intent of the Lean In Community is to facilitate constructive conversations around topics that lead to personal fulfillment and professional success.

Lean In Education

Lean In Education will foster practical skills in the areas of leadership, communication and career navigation. Education modules will include a video lecture, discussion questions and links to additional reading and conclude with a specific call-to-action. Lean In's education modules will be posted online and available to anyone for free.

Lean In's founding research partner is The Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University. The Clayman Institute brings gender intelligence to topics such as power and influence, negotiations and work-life balance. The goal of these modules is to use academic research to help women and men successfully navigate the unique structural and personal challenges linked to gender.

Lean In Circles

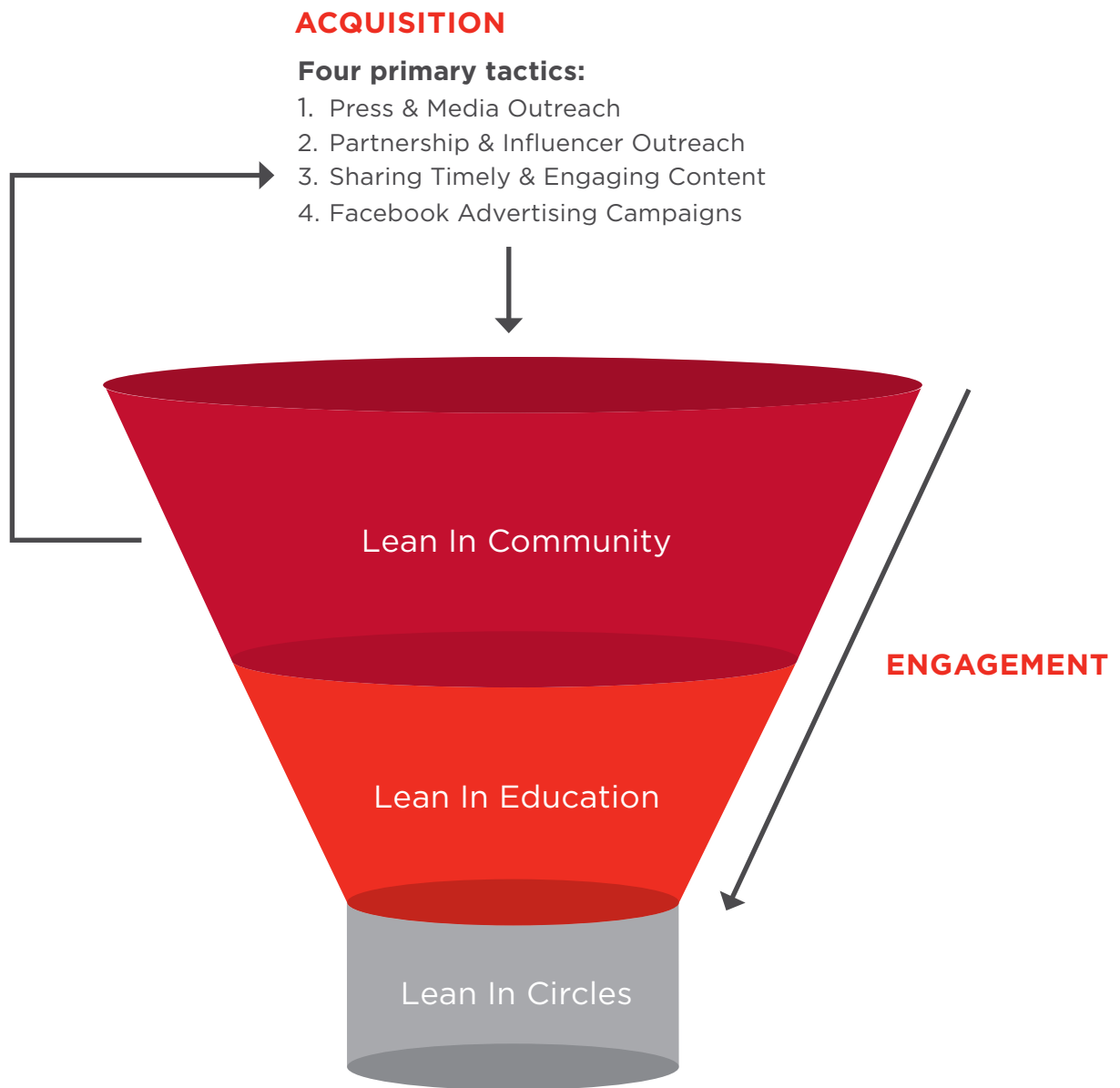
Lean In Circles are groups of eight to twelve peers who meet monthly to explore professional topics and exchange personal experiences in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust. From the YPO (Young Presidents' Organization) to microcredit lending collectives and study groups, the effectiveness of small peer groups to change behavior and achieve goals is indisputable.

Lean In will provide the materials and infrastructure to create Lean In Circles and find peers to participate in them. Individuals can self organize into groups, and organizations can power co-branded Circles (e.g., *Booz Allen Hamilton Lean In Circles* and *Stanford University Lean In Circles*).

Lean In Community

Building a Large, Active Online Community

Lean In will use a variety of proven tactics to drive members to our Facebook page and website:



Lean In Community

1. Press and Media Outreach

Lean In will use national press and media coverage around the release of Sheryl's book to kickstart our community growth; then our extended team will conduct ongoing outreach around important and timely topics to maintain Lean In's public visibility. These publicity programs will be translated into social media campaigns to drive people into our activation funnel.

2. Partnership and Influencer Outreach

Lean In will drive community members through partnerships with companies and influencers. We will target individuals with large followings and credibility on the topics of women's leadership, management and business, among others.

3. Sharing Timely and Engaging Content

We will tap a broad array of influencers and experts to contribute to the Lean In Community. The more people who engage, the more new and relevant content will be available for social sharing and promoting Lean In to new communities.

Our content development strategy will be driven by:

- + **Theme of women's leadership.** Lean In's content and community efforts will support the theme of women leaning into leadership. Our materials will strive to be inspirational and thought provoking, from profiles of role models and Lean In success stories to meaningful daily quotes and DIY activities.
- + **Compelling voices.** Lean In will feature content from senior leaders (both women and men) across industry, government and academia. Additionally, the "teachers" of our education modules will be invited to participate in the community in an ongoing way.
- + **Relevance.** Our team and network of influencers and experts will quickly engage around timely topics, such as important news articles and moments in popular culture.
- + **Fostering a two-way dialogue.** Lean In will ask questions, begin directed discussions and spur the community to exchange insights and ideas.
- + **Visual content.** Images tend to be shared more often than any other form of media; we will embrace this by focusing on photographs, infographics and other highly visual content.
- + **Different things for different channels.** Different social media channels attract slightly different types of people, behaviors and conversations. We will take a sophisticated approach to running experiments and measuring effectiveness by channel to determine how each outlet best contributes to Lean In.
- + **Cross-marketing and promotion.** Our network of influencers and experts will share posts on Facebook, Twitter and other social networks.

4. Facebook Advertising Campaigns

We will tap into Facebook's highly targeted advertising products to amplify the impact of Lean In's content, especially as we see specific themes, information and/or events taking off. We will allocate a quarterly budget for Facebook advertising to optimize our results and grow the reach for our most effective social content.

Lean In Education

Approach

- + **Offer actionable instruction.** Our education modules will introduce key concepts and teach the hard and soft skills to pursue leadership confidently.
- + **Provide a path to leadership through education.** We will set a cohesive path for the Lean In Community by promoting a series of topics that build upon each other over time.
- + **Crowdsource education content.** Academics and experts all over the world will be encouraged to contribute high-quality educational modules. All education modules will be approved by Lean In before being distributed to the Community.

Education Topics - Year One

LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

- + **Power & Influence**, Deb Gruenfeld, Stanford Graduate School of Business**
- + **Using Stories Powerfully: Advocating for Your Ideas**, Jennifer Aaker, Stanford Graduate School of Business**
- + **Negotiations**, Margaret Neale, Stanford Graduate School of Business**
- + **Team Dynamics**, Melissa Thomas-Hunt, Darden School of Management**
- + **Unconditional Responsibility: The Power of Being a Player**, Fred Kofman, Co-Founder Axialent Leadership Development

COMMUNICATION

- + **Authentic Communication**, Fred Kofman
- + **Difficult Conversations**, TBD
- + **Giving & Getting Feedback**, TBD

PERSONAL SUCCESS & NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER

- + **Playing to Your Strengths**, Marcus Buckingham, Creator of *StrengthsFinder*
- + **Happiness & Expectations: How to Set & Align Goals**, Jennifer Aaker**
- + **Time Management & Efficiency**, TBD

** Denotes a module that focuses on Gender Intelligence

Education Topics Deliverables

For each education module, we will offer a set of consistent materials, including:

- + **Lecture.** 20-40 minute video lecture (written transcript also available)
- + **Discussion Guide.** Set of questions for discussion
- + **Video Highlight.** 2-3 minute 'best of' to capture interest
- + **Video Shorts.** Lecture cut into 3-5 minute sections for focused engagement
- + **One Action.** At the end of each module participants will be asked to change one action
- + **Additional Materials.** Links to research, articles, books, movies, etc. to go deeper

Lean In Circles

Overview

Lean In Circles are self-organizing groups of 8-12 peers who meet monthly to explore professional topics and exchange personal experiences in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust.

- + **Circle meetings:**
 - Once a month for three hours
 - Led by a moderator (2-3 Circle members will be trained as co-moderators)
 - Content will alternate monthly between:
 - Education Meetings: Incorporates an education module for group learning
 - Exploration Discussion Meetings: Focused on topics and situations facing Circle members
- + **Private online spaces** for additional conversations, support and information-sharing between meetings

Organizing Principles

1. Keep it simple out of the gate.
2. Each module ends with action.
3. Launch and learn: focus on the first twelve months to learn what will drive long-term success.

Member Commitments

Lean In Circles will require several important commitments from moderators and members:

- + **Select true peers who can provide mutual support—women who are:**
 - Equally committed to professional and personal effectiveness
 - At similar stages in their respective careers
 - In a position to listen to and share confidential information. We recommend against joining a Circle with clients, direct reports or anyone you may have to sell to or partner with in your job.
 - Able to commit to supporting member success. We recommend against joining a Circle with anyone who might be directly competitive, such as someone who could be up for the same job.
- + **Define a shared vision and purpose for your Circle.** Each Circle will have its own unique vision, purpose and values based on its members and what they want to get out of the experience.
- + **Commit to attend.** Lean In Circles will only work if members show up. Don't invite flakes. Each Circle should ask its members to make an attendance commitment—for example, you can't miss more than 2 sessions per year.
- + **Commit to absolute confidentiality.** Circles need to be a safe place to be effective. Understanding confidentiality—and how it is the fundamental underpinning of Circle trust—will make members better leaders at work and better friends. We recommend a “one strike and you are out” rule around confidentiality.
- + **Share experiences, not advice.** The power of Lean In Circles is in the ability to reserve judgment. Discussions are based on sharing experiences that may be of value to other members as they explore opportunities and challenges in their business and personal life.

Lean In Circles

Format for Circle Meetings

Monthly meetings alternate between Education Meetings and Exploration Discussion Meetings.

CHECK-IN

Up to 15 Minutes

- + Confidentiality and process reminders
- + Any group issues are surfaced

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

3 Minutes Each

- + Quick update on major personal and career developments
- + Answer a prepared question related to the presentation topic and circulated prior to the meeting

PRESENTATION

60-90 Minutes

- + Education Module (every other month)
- Exploration Discussion (every other month)

EXPLORATION

30-60 Minutes

- + In Education Meetings, there is an optional exploration on the same topic as the module
- + In Exploration Discussion Meetings, there is a main exploration discussion followed by an optional 30-60 minute exploration discussion on a different or related topic

HOUSEKEEPING

Up to 15 Minutes

- + New members
- + Next meeting
- + What worked this meeting, and what do we want to change?

Lean In Circles

Roles of Circle Members

Annual roles renewed once a year:

- + **Circle Co-Moderators.** Responsible for organizing the Circle, integrating new members and ensuring its overall success. Moderators are also responsible for the structure and topics of the meeting itself. We recommend 2-3 members share the moderator role; training will be provided on leanin.org

Rotating roles per meeting:

- + **Exploring Member.** Outlines a specific situation or topic. Other members then share their relevant experiences on the topic.
- + **Timekeeper.** Ensures the meeting adheres to time limits and stays on track.
- + **Experience Keeper.** Ensures the interactions of the meeting focus on sharing experiences. A key protocol for Circles is reserving judgment and not offering advice.

Education Modules

Circles will focus on education modules every other month. The general structure of the Education Meetings will be to move members from the personal to the structural then back to the personal by:

- + Introducing the topic
- + Exploring how gender matters on this topic
- + Watching the lecture via video
- + Discussing the topic
- + [Online after meeting] Going deeper: more information, resources and follow up conversations

Future Topics

The co-moderators of each Lean In Circle will be responsible for keeping a list of topics—or a “Topic Lot”—of future explorations to discuss in their Lean In Circle. Lean In will provide suggestions to seed the Topic Lot, and each Circle will aim for a backlog of 30-40 topics to cover in any year.

Measuring Success

- + Online survey of Circle participants to assess what is and is not working
- + Peer comparison survey at initial launch
- + Ongoing measurement

Lean In How It Works

Technology

Lean In Circles will be powered by Mightybell, a new start-up for organizing networks of groups. Mightybell's technology provides an easy way for individuals to engage with a global community (the Lean In Community) as well as private spaces for communicating with smaller groups (an individual's Lean In Circle). The Lean In Community will be tightly integrated with Facebook to incorporate it into members' daily lives.

Partnerships / Platform

Lean In is not designed to create another proprietary women's organization. Our goal is to support existing women's organizations and networks with a set of tools to engage and invigorate their goals, mission and members. Our content and services will be available on an open platform so any organization can benefit from them.

Measuring Success

We will carefully measure the impact of our programs as follows:

Lean In Community

- + Participation: number of members
- + Engagement: number of posts, shares, referrals, etc.

Lean In Education

- + Participation: use of education modules
- + Satisfaction: user feedback

Lean In Circles

- + Participation: number of members
- + Satisfaction: moderator and member feedback

We will also track the career progression and personal satisfaction of our members.

Funding & Structure

Seed funding is being provided by Sheryl Sandberg. Lean In will initially be a Section 501(c)(3) private operating foundation but may transition to a public charity in the future.

Launch Timing

The Lean In Community website (www.leanin.org) will go live as an invite-only beta in early 2013. Full launch will be in March 2013 coinciding with the *Lean In* book release.

Lean In Team

Founders

- + **Sheryl Sandberg**, Chief Operating Officer, Facebook
- + **Gina Bianchini**, Founder & CEO, Mightybell
- + **Rachel Thomas**, President, Lean In
- + **Debi Hemmeter**, Director of Partnerships, Lean In
- + **Nicole Stiffle**, Director of Community, Lean In

Launch Committee

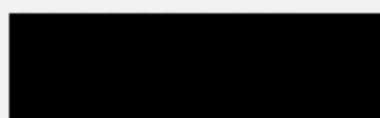
- + **Mari Baker**, Corporate Director and Startup Advisor
- + **Brandee Barker**, Founder & CEO, bb Consulting; Former Head of Global Communications & Public Policy, Facebook
- + **Joanne Bradford**, Chief Revenue & Marketing Officer, Demand Media
- + **Tracy Britt**, Financial Assistant to the Chairman, Berkshire Hathaway
- + **Stacy Brown Philpot**, COO, TaskRabbit
- + **Marianne Cooper**, Sociologist, Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University
- + **Shelley Correll**, Barbara D. Finberg Director of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University; Professor in the Department of Sociology, Stanford University
- + **JC Ford**, Brand & Voice Consultant
- + **Caroline Ghosn**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, The Levo League
- + **Naomi Gleit**, Director of Product, Facebook
- + **Susan Gonzales**, Head of Community Engagement, Facebook
- + **Carol Hansen**, President & CEO, Tatonka Capital Corporation; Chair YPO/WPO Woman's International Network
- + **Sue Hesse**, Founder & CEO of Hesse Partners; YPO/WPO Certified Forum Facilitator
- + **Matt Jacobson**, Head of Market Development, Facebook
- + **Sara Jordan-Bloch**, Sociologist, Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University
- + **Laura Cox Kaplan**, Principal-in-Charge of U.S. Government, Regulatory Affairs & Public Policy, PwC
- + **Dr. Ellen Konar**, Entrepreneurial Executive & Chairman of the Board, Mindset Works
- + **Michelle Kydd Lee**, Foundation Director, Creative Artists Agency
- + **Libby Leffler**, Strategic Partner Manager, Facebook
- + **Lauren Lyon**, previously Head of Partnerships, SamaSource
- + **Lori Nishiura Mackenzie**, Associate Director of the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University
- + **Katie Mitic**, Founder & CEO, Three Koi Labs; Board of Directors, eBay
- + **Kunal Modi**, Harvard MBA student, graduating class 2013
- + **Lauren Nieman**, Video Producer, Creative Producers Group
- + **Amanda Pouchot**, Founder & President of West Coast Acquisitions
- + **Kim Scott**, VP for Operations and Online Sales, Dropbox
- + **Nell Scovell**, TV writer, producer and director; journalist; speechwriter
- + **Christine Silva**, President, Avenue Partners and Former Senior Director in Research, Catalyst
- + **Rachel Sklar**, Founder, Change the Ratio and The Li.st
- + **Devon Spurgeon**, Executive Vice President for Global Strategy, Hill+Knowlton Strategies
- + **Jennifer Rudolph Walsh**, Board Member & Head of Worldwide Literary Department, WME

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Rachel Thomas
President



Debi Hemmeter
Director of Partnerships



Lean In Partner Guidelines

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Other Partner Materials

<i>Guidelines for an Optional Lean In Story</i>	<i>Provided as a separate document</i>
<i>Toolkit to Support Employee Outreach</i>	<i>Provided by Lean In on February 25</i>

For additional information, please contact:

Debi Hemmeter
Director of Partnerships
925.899.5677
debi@leanin.org

Introduction to Lean In

Lean In's mission is to create a global community dedicated to supporting women "leaning in" to their ambitions.

Catalyzed by the book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead* written by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, a team of leaders in business, government and academia has come together to launch the Lean In Foundation. Lean In will combine practical education and focused discussion to give women the tools they need to realize their goals.

Women represent an important part of the workforce, earning 57 percent of undergraduate and 63 percent of Masters degrees in the United States today. Yet many organizations struggle to attract and retain high-potential women, especially in the most senior roles. Lean In wants to partner with organizations that share our passion for reversing this trend and changing the trajectory of women in the workplace.

Key Programs

Lean In consists of three integrated programs designed to support women throughout their professional life, each with unique opportunities for our partners:

Lean In Community

WHAT IT IS

An online community tightly integrated with Facebook to provide daily access to inspirational ideas and people, conversations on important topics, and insights from senior leaders across business, government and academia.

The Lean In Community will also celebrate the stories of women and men who have overcome challenges and personal uncertainty to “lean in” to their ambitions. We call these Lean In Stories.

BENEFIT TO YOU

A direct connection to Lean In’s community and knowledge base will foster the confidence and know-how your employees need to excel at work.

Lean In Education

WHAT IT IS

A growing series of education materials on topics critical to your employees’ success, ranging from negotiation skills to team dynamics. Each education session includes a 15 to 20-minute video lecture and a discussion guide developed by our founding research partner The Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University or other experts such as Marcus Buckingham (strength finding), Fred Kaufman (leadership) and Bill Hoogterp (public speaking).

BENEFIT TO YOU

Your employees will have ongoing access to world-class education in areas critical to job satisfaction and professional advancement. Lean In will report on employee participation and share data on the impact of our programs beginning in Q3 2013.

Lean In Circles

WHAT IT IS

Structured groups of 8 to 12 peers who meet monthly to explore professional topics and exchange personal experiences in an atmosphere of confidentiality and trust. Lean In will provide the materials and infrastructure to support Circles on leanin.org and via Mightybell.com, a new technology platform for organizing networks of small groups. By June 2013, Lean In will also power co-branded Circles for our partners. Co-branded Circles will allow your organization to share proprietary materials with your network of Circles and communicate with your members directly.

BENEFIT TO YOU

The effectiveness of peer groups in driving positive change is indisputable; your participating employees will literally work together to advance their personal and professional well-being and success.

Lean In provides all the materials and infrastructure to support our Community, Education and Circle programs at no cost to your company and your employees.

Ways to Participate

How You Can Participate Right Now

Show the World You're Leaning In

Submit your company logo and an executive quote for inclusion in the “Partners Leaning In” section of leanin.org.

See page 7 for step-by-step guidelines for submitting your company's Partner Profile. Once you have submitted your profile information, Lean In will officially recognize your company for supporting Lean In and our efforts to advance women.

Contribute an optional Lean In Story

Lean In will promote the stories of women and men who have overcome challenges and personal uncertainty to “lean in” to their ambitions on leanin.org and in our social media. Partners are invited (but by no means required) to submit one Lean In Story written by an employee that epitomizes the spirit of leaning in.

Please refer to the document titled “Lean In Story Guidelines” for more information about Lean In Stories and how to submit one on behalf of your company.

How You Can Participate After Our March 8 Launch

Join the Lean In Community:

- + Like Lean In on Facebook at facebook.com/leaninorg
- + Follow Lean In on Twitter at twitter.com/leaninorg
- + Participate in the ongoing community discussion

Promote Lean In to your employees—encourage them to:

- + Join the Lean In Community to receive daily insights & inspiration
- + Read & share Lean In Stories
- + Watch lectures on topics critical to their success
- + Participate in a Lean In Circle
- + Stay connected to the Lean In Community on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & other social networks

Lean In will send partners an outreach ‘toolkit’ on February 25, including recommended promotional copy, our logo and high-impact graphics.

3 Things Every Partner Should Know

NO COST TO YOUR COMPANY

There are no costs associated with partnering with Lean In. We just ask that you publicly support our mission and actively promote our Community to your employees.

PARTICIPATION IS FLEXIBLE

Partners are free to use Lean In's programs and materials in whatever way makes sense for your organization and its goals. Lean In intends to serve as a flexible platform for our partners to build upon.

WHERE YOUR LOGO WILL APPEAR

Partner logos will appear on a page titled “Partners Leaning In” on leanin.org. Lean In will not use your logo in social media or promotional materials of any kind without written approval.

Launch Schedule

- + **February 15:** Final deadline for submitting your company's Partner Profile and optional Lean In Story for inclusion on leanin.org at launch. Submissions received after February 15 will be added to leanin.org on a rolling basis.
- + **February 25:** Lean In provides 'toolkit' for promoting Lean In to your employees/members.
- + **March 4-8:** First national press coverage for Lean In; Leanin.org website and Lean In Circles officially launch. *Note: Please hold all public communication about Lean In until March 8.*
- + **March 8-11:** Partners promote Lean In to their employees/members across all available channels (social media, website, email, print, etc.).
- + **March 11:** Lean In book is released in the United States and all English-speaking countries; international rollout of book continues through June.
- + **March 11-15:** Concentration of TV appearances promoting Lean In.

Guidelines for Partner Profile

Partner profiles will be featured on the “Partners Leaning In” page on our website. Your profile will include:

- + Organization name
- + Logo
- + Quote from key executive
- + URL to web page of your choice
- + URL for Facebook page (optional)

Logo Guidelines

- + File format: transparent png
- + Minimum size: 125 x 260 pixels

Quote Guidelines

- + Quote should highlight your organization’s motivation for leaning in
- + Please include name and title of executive
- + Maximum length: 250 characters

EXAMPLE:

“[Organization] is leaning in because we want strong female leadership at all levels of our organization. We believe in the power of gender-balanced teams, and we are committed to fostering an environment where they thrive.”

Jane Smith, CEO

Please email all Partner Profile materials to JC Ford at [REDACTED] and include your contact information so we can follow up any questions.

Submissions received by February 15 will be featured on leanin.org at launch.

We cannot guarantee submissions received after February 15 will be featured, but we will certainly try.

For additional information, please contact:

Debi Hemmeter
Director of Partnerships



Guidelines for Lean In Stories

Guidelines for Lean In Stories

The Lean In Community will actively promote and celebrate the stories of women and men who have overcome challenges and personal uncertainty to “lean in” to their ambitions. We call these Lean In Stories.

Partners are encouraged to submit a Lean In Story, but please note this is entirely optional.

We recommend you select an employee with a very accessible and personal story to tell. Her/his story will be added to a growing collection of community stories on leanin.org and may appear in our social media.

Submission Overview

Stories should include the following:

- + Name (first and last)
- + Occupation (please review Makers.com for examples)
- + Company Name
- + Location (city, state)
- + Lean In Story copy (500 word limit)
- + Headshot-style photo

For additional information, please contact:

Debi Hemmeter
Director of Partnerships



Story Guildlines

How to Write a Good Lean In Story

A Lean In Story is a first-person account that follows a traditional story arc: set the stage, introduce a tension point, decide to “lean in” or “lean back,” share the resolution, and show the future.

Set the stage.

Offer a short account of details leading up to the tension point.

EXAMPLE:

“I had been working in my department for three years when my boss decided to leave and pursue an opportunity with our global office. The company decided to look internally before opening the job up to the public.”

Introduce the tension point.

A tension point is typically characterized by facing fear, vulnerability or doubt while making an important decision. Make sure to outline what the paths of leaning in and/or leaning back looked like.

Leaning in means pushing through the challenges and going down a path with an uncertain outcome. The path often leads to a positive internal result (newfound confidence, strength or determination) and often an external reward (promotion, raise or goal achieved.)

Leaning back means choosing to stay in a known or comfortable situation. This often leads to an internal realization (desire to grow, change, consider leaning in the next time) and possibly a negative external result (stagnation, missed opportunities, loss of income.)

EXAMPLE:

“While the idea of taking over for my boss felt both exciting and challenging, I was afraid to leave the security of my current position. I’d become comfortable with my routine and had earned the respect of my co-workers. Going after the promotion meant that I would now be leading the team instead of working alongside my peers. I worried that people wouldn’t like me once I became the boss.”

Story Guildlines

Decide to lean in or lean back.

Most stories will be about leaning in, but you may choose to reflect on a time when you decided to lean back. In either instance, share how you went about making the decision. Include your thoughts about why you chose the path you did, how the decision felt and what you did to move the situation forward.

EXAMPLE:

"On the day of the first round of interviews, I was still on the fence. I paced the length of my office for an hour, debating the pros and the cons. Then, I caught sight of my college diploma, which was hanging on the wall opposite my desk. It reminded me of a time in the past when I had gone after what I wanted. I knew that if I didn't make a move, I might be in the same place five years later. So I forced myself to open the door and walk down the long hallway to the conference room. I was so nervous, I could actually feel my heart beating through my sweater."

Share the resolution.

After leaning in (or leaning back) comes the resolution. How did you feel after the decision was made? How did the situation play out?

EXAMPLE:

"The interview was a blur. I remember feeling surprisingly confident from the moment I walked into the room. I shared the reasons I was a great fit for the job based on my current position and outlined how I would attack certain aspects of the role in new and innovative ways. I think that made the difference, because two days later, I was packing up my cubicle and moving into my brand new office."

Show the future.

How did your decision to lean In (or lean back) impact you, both personally and professionally? Share a positive ending about what you learned from the experience. Don't be afraid to weave in some closing advice or words of wisdom.

EXAMPLE:

"I have been in the position for four years now, and I've loved every minute of it. Becoming the boss was easier than I had anticipated. I talked with my co-workers about my vision for the team and incorporated their feedback, which really helped. In my new position, I've seen firsthand how my decisions have a greater impact on the company as a whole, which is very rewarding. I now regularly encourage the members of my team to go after new opportunities."

Story Guildlines

Photo Guidelines

- + Photo should be taken in front of a simple, relatively monochromatic background
- + Photo should work well in a horizontal format (as opposed to a square profile picture format)
- + Photo should be taken with a digital camera (as opposed to a smartphone)
- + Minimum size: 300 x 160 pixels

Please visit **Makers.com** for examples of photos.

Please email all Lean In Story materials materials to JC Ford at [REDACTED] and include your contact information so we can follow up any questions.

Submissions received by February 15 will be featured on leanin.org at launch.

We cannot guarantee submissions received after February 15 will be featured, but we will certainly try.

Sample Story



“I’m young and know I’ll still make mistakes, but the last few years have given me the confidence that I can shape my career and my life.”

Wei Deng

Occupation/ Operations Manager for Gaming Startup
Location/ Mountain View, CA

In October 2008, I felt incredibly lucky. I was about to start working at one of the top law firms in the country, and I felt like the world was mine for the taking. But after two years of drafting documents, I realized I’d lost my passion for the law. Not knowing quite what to do and afraid of diverting too far off course, I decided to switch to another tried-and-true profession, investment banking.

After teaching myself financial modeling at night and enduring countless rejections, I landed a coveted banking job. Luck had seemingly struck again. Yet within a few months, I realized that my passion was not in finance, law or the corporate world. I felt lost. I was scared of my next step, of making another “dumb decision.”

I plowed forward because I knew I wanted to be passionate about my career. I started thinking about the times I was happiest at work. They all involved thinking critically about a deeply analytical and scientific problem. I wanted to be somewhere it was cool to think that way, and I realized this meant a huge career shift: I wanted to work in technology.

Everybody was against it. They saw me leaving a prestigious and cushy position for an unknown and risky future. My friends panicked for me. My parents, whose opinion means everything to me, were dead set against it. But I knew what I wanted to do...what I had to do.

I took a leap of faith and landed a job in Silicon Valley. The day I received my offer letter, a friend tried to get me to reconsider my decision. He told me that I had invested too much time in the law (and then in moving to banking) to move off the path. I liked and respected him, but that night I picked up a pen and signed my offer letter.

I have never looked back. I finally have a job that I love. I’m young and know I’ll still make mistakes, but the last few years have given me the confidence that I can shape my career and my life. I am thankful for the journey and look forward to a lifetime of destinations.

Sample Story



“Julia Child didn’t learn to cook until she was 36. And I really doubt she wasted time worrying about wasted time.”

Leigh Browne

Occupation/ Copywriter for Ad Agency

Location/ Austin, TX

I started out as a newspaper reporter. When I decided to leave journalism, I had no idea where I’d end up. I just knew that newspapers were struggling and that I was burning out.

I needed some time to figure out what next, so I took a marketing job and even explored an MBA. That’s how I discovered the creative advertising sequence at The University of Texas. It felt like just the right balance of business and fun, so I decided to go for it.

Still, it was going to be a big investment of money and time. Plus, I’d be almost 31 by the time I graduated. But I kept reminding myself that Julia Child didn’t learn to cook until she was 36. And I really doubt she wasted time worrying about wasted time.

I studied like mad for the GRE, wrote my application essay and reached out for recommendations. I not only got in; I got a fellowship that covered my first year of tuition.

I worked remotely for the first year, which was stressful. Weekends became just another time to work. Many nights my husband would go to bed, and I’d stay up working into the next morning.

I had a mantra that kept me going, “When you’re green, you grow. When you’re ripe, you rot.” Repeating that helped me remember that if I wasn’t in over my head at least some of the time, then I probably wasn’t getting any better. I also realized that I couldn’t focus enough on my new career when I was still using up so much energy on my old one. So I put in my notice.

A month before graduation, I became the first member of my class to get hired by an ad agency, GSD&M. Since then, my age hasn’t held me back. Even though sometimes I wish I’d found copywriting at 22, I don’t know if I would have been any good. Everything that led me here makes me who I am today.

I sometimes feel like I wandered into my career because my path has curved so much. But I’ve learned that if you stay flexible and open to what the world offers, detours can get you where you need to be.